

FINAL VERSION

*Officially approved by the Chair and Board at the Brownsville, Texas
GNEB Board Meeting, July24-25, 2007 subject to edits duly
incorporated into text that follows*

Meeting Summary/Minutes

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board Meeting

**Sky Room, Hotel Washington
515 15th Street NW
Washington, DC**

March 13-14, 2007

Administration: U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Cooperative Environmental Management

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The Good Neighbor Environmental Board Meeting

Sky Room, Hotel Washington
515 15th Street NW
Washington, DC
March 13-14, 2007

Meeting Participants:

Non-Federal Board Members

- Paul Ganster, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, San Diego State University, Chair, San Diego, California
- Christopher P. Brown, Ph.D., Associate Professor, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Michael P. Dorsey, Chief, Hazardous Materials Division, San Diego County Department of Environmental Health
- Edward Elbrock, Rancher, Malpai Borderlands Group, Animas, New Mexico
- Gary Gillen, President, Gillen Pest Control, Richmond, Texas
- Susan Keith, Southern Regional Director, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Tucson, Arizona
- Patti Krebs, Executive Director, Industrial Environmental Association (IEA)
- Jennifer A. Montoya, U.S. Program Director, Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Project, World Wildlife Fund, Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Stephen M. Niemeyer, P.E., Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Austin, Texas
- Robert Varady, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
- Ann Marie A. Wolf, President, Sonora Environment Research Institute, Tucson, Arizona
- John Wood, Commissioner, Cameron County, City of Brownsville, Texas

Federal Board Members

- Daniel D. Darrach, Coordinator, U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs, U.S. Department of State (DOS), Washington, DC
- Marilyn DiSirio, Associate Director of Global Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Atlanta, Georgia
- Carl Edlund, Director of Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division, Region 6, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Dallas, Texas
- Linda Lawson, Director, Safety, Energy and the Environment, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

- Carlos Marin, Commissioner, U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission, (IBWC), El Paso, Texas
- Gary Robison, Acting Associate Chief, Office of Border Patrol, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Rosendo Treviño, Special Assistant to the Chief, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), San Antonio, Texas
- Shannon H. Sorzano, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- James Stefanov, U.S. Geological Service (USGS), U.S. Department of Interior, (DOI), Austin, Texas

Resource Specialists and Agency Alternates

- Christina Machion Quilaqueo, Program Analyst, HUD, Washington, DC
- Rachael Poynter, Office of Mexico Affairs, DOS, Washington, DC
- Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, IBWC, El Paso, Texas
- Lana Corales, CDC, DHHS, Atlanta Georgia

Consejo Consultivo de Desarrollo Sostenible Representative, SEMARNAT

- Flavio Olivieri, Northwest Region Representative

EPA/OCEM Staff and Management

- Elaine Koerner, GNEB Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
- Rafael DeLeon, OCEM Director
- Mark Joyce, OCEM Associate Director
- Geraldine Brown
- Juliana Madrid
- Lois Williams
- Jannell Young-Ancrum

Speakers:

- Jerry Clifford, U.S. Coordinator, Border 2012 Program, and Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of International Affairs, EPA
- David V. Aguilar, Chief, U.S. Border Patrol, DHS
- John C. Twiss, Director, Law Enforcement & Investigations, U.S. Forest Service, USDA
- Larry R. Parkinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Law Enforcement and Security, DOI
- Dana Tulis, Deputy Director, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, EPA
- Bob Richard, Deputy Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety, DOT
- Todd Owens, Executive Director, Cargo and Conveyance Security, DHS, for Jayson P. Ahern, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, CPB, DHS
- Jorge Navarro, Border Coordinator, Mexican Foreign Ministry
- David Applegate, Senior Science Advisor for Earthquakes and Geological Hazards, USGS, DOI
- Sonja Neiuwejaar, Deputy Director, Office of International Affairs, FEMA, DHS

- Dr. Kevin Yeskey, M.D., Deputy Assistant Secretary (Acting), Office of Preparedness and Emergency Operations, HHS
- Flavio Olivieri, NW Region Representative, Consejo Consultivo, SEMARNAT

Public Commenters:

- Juan Antonio Flores, Public Affairs Director, North American Development Bank
- Karen Senhadji, International Affairs, DOI
- Lisa Almodovar, Mexico Team Leader, OIA, EPA

Public Attendees: See Appendix

Meeting Summary/Minutes

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Background

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB or the Board) is an independent advisory committee that is managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It advises the U.S. President and Congress on good-neighbor practices along the U.S.-Mexico border. The focus is on the environmental and infrastructure needs of the U.S. states that are contiguous to Mexico.

Day 1 – March 13, 2007

(9:00 a.m.)

Media event to publicly release the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) Tenth Report to the President and Congress preceded the Board meeting

Welcome and Opening Remarks

(10:00 a.m.)

Dr. Ganster, Ph.D., Chair, welcomed Board members and guests to the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) meeting and asked board members to introduce themselves.

Elaine Koerner, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) asked members of the audience to introduce themselves. Self-introductions took place

Chair Ganster then gave an overview of the Tenth Report for those who had not attended the media event preceding the meeting. He stated that the Tenth Report looked at the effects of security activities in two areas: ports of entry and in more rural areas of the border region. For the more rural areas, the Board recommended strengthening communication and collaboration among security agencies, environmental protection agencies, and land management agencies so as to both provide security and also maintain quality of life for border communities. The Board also recommended employing a mix of technology and personnel to reflect the differing geographical terrain and population groupings along diverse sections of the border.

For ports of entry, where hazardous materials (hazmat) can provide an added security risk, the Board recommends increasing the number of hazmat inspectors onsite. It also recommends establishing sites and hours specific for hazmat vehicles, which have increased due to expanded trade between the U.S. and Mexico. In addition, the Board calls for more extensive information sharing between environmental agencies and security agencies. Moreover, the Board says in its report, liability issues need to be resolved for cross-border

emergency responders. And, finally, information needs to be shared with tribal communities about hazardous materials being transported across their lands.

Morning Panel Sessions on the Tenth Report

Keynote Remarks

(10:15 a.m.)

Jerry Clifford, Deputy Assistant Administrator for International Affairs and U.S. Coordinator, Border 2012 Program, congratulated the GNEB on the Tenth Report and noted that the meeting attendees included a broad representation of federal agencies and other border security experts dealing with border security and environmental issues. *Mr. Clifford* was also pleased with the cooperation between the GNEB and the Border 2012 program in solving the many public health and environmental border problems

For the GNEB reports and recommendations, *Mr. Clifford* asked that the Board consider the policy implications of their topics, recommendations, and advice for border enforcement and environmental protection agencies.

For Border 2012, *Mr. Clifford* discussed the *U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program Border 2012 Midterm Report* and enumerated the guiding principles. Principles related to GNEB included fostering public and stakeholder participation, reducing the highest public health and environmental risks, recognizing the sovereignty of U.S. tribes, and addressing the disproportionate environmental impacts on border citizens.

Mr. Clifford then reported on the accomplishments of the Border 2012 in cooperation with Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), North American Development Bank (NADBank), and the IBWC, including funds for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, removing tire piles and hazardous wastes, and improving tracking of information on border facilities and hazardous waste. Border 2012 is working with the American Indian Office to develop a North American conference on indigenous communities dealing with the environment and public health.

Mr. Clifford described the work of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and its three major areas of focus. The CEC's advisory groups have recommended integrating the work of the CEC, Border 2012, and the GNEB. The CEC would be glad to discuss areas of cooperation. In response to questions about funding related to policy recommendations for the border region, *Mr. Clifford* said the EPA budget for FY2007 was just approved by Congress at the FY2006 level. By removing the earmarks, Congress was able to retain the FY2006 level for water and water infrastructure projects for the NADBank and the BECC. The Southwest Center for Environmental Research and policy (SCERP) is zeroed out for FY2007. For FY2008, the President recommended only \$10 million for border infrastructure. The Office of International Affairs budget would be reduced by 20 percent. The funds for extramural projects would be cut by 50 percent to \$1 million. In Mexico, the same office received a 25 percent reduction under the new administration of President Felipe Calderón.

In response to a suggestion about partnering with DHS to fund some projects, *Mr. Clifford* thought there might be opportunities to work with DHS to leverage resources for public health and environmental issues. The GNEB Tenth Report could facilitate this dialogue.

Panel 1: Undocumented Human Crossings

(10:30 a.m.)

Chair Ganster introduced the first panel, which had been charged with discussing their feedback on the Board's recommendations about security and environmental protection related to undocumented human crossings between ports of entry.

David V. Aguilar, Chief, U.S. Border Patrol, DHS, stated that DHS Border Patrol strategy is focused on reducing illegal entries of terrorists and drug and human smugglers, as well as using non-intrusive technologies and improving quality of life. The Border Patrol operates in three environments: urban, rural, and remote areas. Different strategies and technologies are needed for the different environments. The Border Patrol's goal is to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of resources while minimizing the intrusiveness of border patrol activities.

John C. Twiss, Director, Law Enforcement & Investigations, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture (USDA), stated that the Forest Service could support the recommendations of the GNEB Tenth Report. The Report shows a clear understanding of the issues, the agency's mission, the value of risk, and the barriers to achieving both resource protections and border security. The Forest Service agrees with the need for collaboration among the various agencies and with employing a mix of technologies and people to achieve these goals.

Mr. Twiss provided a brief Forest Service update regarding border security and natural resource issues, particularly in the 60-mile border of the Coronado National Forest, which is an unsafe area. The problems are importation of illegal drugs, armed drug and human smugglers, illegal growing of marijuana in more than 40 national forests, and damage from foot traffic, trash, abandoned vehicles, garbage, erosion, and destruction of wildlife habitat. *Mr. Twiss* lauded the efforts of *Chief Aguilar* in improving the relationship between the Border Patrol and the Forest Service by forming an interagency task force, employing a land management coordinator, developing an MOU between USDA and DOI, and co-locating facilities. Best management practices are being promoted for Border Patrol activities.

Mr. Twiss discussed the Tenth Report challenges as they pertain to the Forest Service. The Forest Service is identifying sensitive resources, strengthening communication with the public, and would consider establishing an office to analyze the impact of border security on the environment. The problem with the second challenge of clean-up is the safety of bringing in volunteers. The Forest Service agrees with the report's third challenge as cited: damage to wildlife from fencing.

Larry R. Parkinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Law Enforcement and Security, Department of Interior (DOI), stated that the GNEB Tenth Report was a balanced report.

The agency agrees with the conclusions and they look forward to working with the GNEB to implement the recommendations. The important aspect of the public's and rangers' safety needs more development in the report. Rangers have been threatened by smugglers, who use a wide variety of sophisticated weapons and technology. Secretary Kempthorne, after a visit to the border area, said the government has lost control of public lands. In the remote areas, flexibility in types of barriers is the key.

Mr. Parkinson focused on the collaboration between DOI, DHS, and the Forest Service based on a MOU signed by the three Secretaries that includes environmental sensitivity. DOI has a law enforcement component, and about 200 of 4,000 officers are deployed in the Southwest border area. He noted *Chief Aguilar's* work in developing a Public Lands Liaison Agent in every Border Patrol sector, who would work with the public land managers to address environmental issues. He agreed with the Report's statement that vigorous border security can actually prevent or limit harm to the environment by apprehending people as soon as possible, and also prevent some of the 200 deaths a year in the desert.

Panel I Questions and Comments

In response to a question about displacement of illegal persons and activities to Texas because of border patrol activities in Arizona, *Chief Aguilar* agreed that displacement would occur, but they are increasing resources and infrastructure to prevent criminal activity along the Texas border as well. By the end of September, a security system would cover 72 miles at the Texas border. Under the SBI Net program, \$1.2 billion will be spent to increase surveillance.

As to whether the National Guard could be used to provide safety for park management employees, *Mr. Parkinson* said the National Guard is assisting the Border Patrol in building infrastructure, but is not engaged in law enforcement activities. *Chief Aguilar* added that in *Operation Jump Start*, more than 6,000 National Guard personnel enabled them to gain over 340 miles of additional surveillance. By the end of FY2008, DOI will have 18,500 personnel, up from 12,550 currently working at the border.

Robert Varady brought up the difference between border patrol activities which appeared to focus on illegal activity rather than on preventing terrorists from entering the country. *Chief Aguilar* responded that the vast amount of clutter and illegal activity at the border must be mitigated to prevent the possibility of terrorists entering the border. The ports of entry are guarded by the Office of Field Operations, not the Border Patrol.

Mr. Parkinson added that in 2005, 366 illegal aliens from special interest countries, including Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, were apprehended at the borders. Three of these aliens later were convicted of terrorist activities.

Susan Keith expressed concern about the use of Border Patrol checkpoints in fragile environmental areas as opposed to highways in Arizona. *Chief Aguilar* responded that checkpoints use a wide range of technical devices to avoid environmental damage and need to cover remote areas, not just highways.

Panel II: Hazardous Materials Crossings

(11:30 a.m.)

Chair Ganster stated that the next Panel would focus on hazardous material crossings.

Dana Tulis, Deputy, Office of Emergency Management, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, EPA, said she serves as the Co-Chair of the Border 2012 Emergency Preparedness and Response Program Workgroup (BWWG), which was set up under the 1983 La Paz agreement between the U.S. and Mexico under the auspices of EPA and its Mexican counterpart SEMARNAT. An official from the Mexican enforcement agency, Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA), serves as the other Co-Chair.

The Workgroup operates as the steering committee for the Joint Response Team (JRT), which is similar to the U.S. National Response Team (NRT). The NRT coordinates 14 agency efforts and serves as a backup of resources for local and states' first responders. The JRT includes U.S. and Mexican national agencies, as well as state and local agencies and tribes along both sides of the border.

Some of the BWWG accomplishments to date in emergency preparedness and response include developing 14 sister city emergency response plans, training personnel, conducting tabletop and field exercises on hazardous materials, and revising the Joint Contingency Plan to coordinate international, state and local efforts to improve communication.

The Workgroup's initiatives for 2006/2007 have included testing and updating the notification system between Mexico and the U.S.; expediting cross-border responses for people and equipment under the Trusted Traveler Program; securing liability insurance coverage for local emergency cross-border responders, and strengthening partnerships with U.S. and Mexican offices at all levels, including CBP, NorthCom (DOD asset), Protección Civil, CENACOM, and Aduanas.

Bob Richard, Associate Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), Department of Transportation (DOT), provided an overview of his administration, which works with other offices within DOT to regulate hazardous materials transportation. One of his collateral duties is as Chairman of the United Nations Subcommittee on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, which writes regulations on international transport.

Prior to 1992, Mr. Richard said, Mexico did not have any hazardous materials regulations, so PHMSA worked with officials there to establish these regulations. PHMSA has responsibilities in the areas of enforcement, planning, and training, and writes regulations for carriers, shippers, manufacturers, and governments. PHMSA inspectors cannot cover all of the law enforcement activities, so this area is shared with state and local governments. Training has been done on both sides of the border for emergency response teams, carriers and shippers.

The goal for the hazmat program is to prevent risk by working with hazmat transporters on increasing safety and security. PHMSA works with other Federal agencies, such as the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Department of Homeland

Security (DHS) to enforce regulations under their modalities. PHMSA meets twice a year with Mexico to ensure that regulations are harmonized.

Development and dissemination of training and information materials is a major part of enhancing hazardous materials transportation safety. Other materials available include a CD on hazmat and security awareness, training videos, and an emergency response guidebook.

Todd Owens, Executive Director, Cargo and Conveyance Security, Office of Field Operations, DHS, spoke on behalf of *Jayson Ahern, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations*, who was on travel to Canada. The Office of Field Operations has responsibility for operations within the 324 official ports of entry, of which 42 are on the Mexican border. *Mr. Owens* is responsible for cargo programs, including inspection technology, gamma and x-ray imaging systems, and all radiation portal detection equipment.

The agency employs a risk management approach to detect whether the 29.5 million containers and trailers that enter the U.S. each year, whether by land or sea, contain hazardous materials, weapons of mass destruction, illegal humans, narcotics, or illegal weapons. *Mr. Owens* described some of the methods used to detect illegal or dangerous cargo: an automated targeting system, assignment of a risk score, and imaging systems. Radiation portal monitors enables screening to be improved compared with a year ago. An industry partnership allows the agency to secure the supply chain through the Customs Trade Partnership against Terrorism.

In addition, the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) Program requires that all truck drivers carrying hazmat materials from Canada and Mexico possess a FAST card, which speeds up transport. A layered enforcement strategy allows them to assign a risk based on a risk score. Hazmat materials inspection is assisted by state and local officers.

Panel II Questions and Comments

Carl Edlund asked if the country is prepared for multiple types of threats. *Ms. Tulis* answered that EPA is doing gaps analysis to prepare for five simultaneous events.

Flavio Olivieri asked whether Mexican trucks carrying hazmat materials were allowed to obtain a FAST pass and cross the border, and if RFID technologies are used to track hazmat containers. *Mr. Richard* said that Mexican hazmat trucks can come into a commercial zone in the U.S., but cannot go long-haul. RFID is one method to track hazardous materials. The type of approach depends on the degree of risk.

DFO Koerner announced the meeting was open for public comments. Three people were signed up to speak: Karen Sennhadji, Juan Antonio Flores, and Lisa Almodovar.

Karen Sennhadji, U. S. Department of Interior (DOI), wanted to highlight the dedication of DOI biologists, archeologists and interpretative rangers, who have stayed onsite in their public lands positions along the border despite the challenges. The Bureau of Land Management staff has had a long history of working with the border patrol in exchanging information about eco-sensitive areas and different cultures. *Ms. Sennhadji* also said that BLM also talked to colleagues about the importance of Border Patrol techniques in providing security.

Juan Antonio Flores, Public Affairs Director, North American Development Bank (NADBank) thanked the Board for its letters of support, which were instrumental in advancing the policy initiatives of the institution. The newly established joint Board of Directors for both NADBank and BECC has met twice, and a large number of projects have been approved for financing. The total amount of funding for projects is now \$844.42 million. The majority of the funds, around \$493.9 million, come from EPA's border fund. The total cost of the 98 projects is more than \$2.5 billion. In the U.S.-Mexico border area, there are now 17 communities that are provided for the first time with wastewater treatment service.

The problem is that EPA's border fund has continued to diminish over the years, from \$100 million down to \$50 million. Even worse, the FY2008 budget for the Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) is only \$10 million. The pace of BECC and NADBank projects development and financing of basic water and wastewater infrastructure projects would be significantly impacted at that funding level were this figure to be the final funding figure.

Mr. Flores invited GNEB members to the NADBank/BECC Board meeting on March 27, 2007, in San Antonio, Texas. He said the NADBank/BECC Board would be considering several potential projects in the new sectors of renewable energy, air quality, etc., as well as basic water, wastewater, and solid waste projects. Many of these projects are private sector initiatives.

Questions and Comments for Mr. Flores

Stephen Niemeyer asked whether the explanation for the decreased funding was related to the slowness of fund disbursement for projects by the NADBank. *Mr. Flores* answered that NADBank is moving to accelerate fund disbursement by fully funding projects that are approved and under way. Funding is required up front for project development, and has been held up by political considerations. For example, \$60 million was designated for the international wastewater treatment plant in Nogales, but has not been dispersed due to political and engineering dilemmas. NADBank needs to improve its coordination and oversight of local project sponsors to ensure that construction stays on track and funds are disbursed accordingly.

In response to questions from *Ms. Keith*, *Mr. Flores* explained that NADBank is capitalized with funds from both the U.S. and Mexican governments, and this does not require

Congressional approval. The BEIF grant is appropriated by Congress and administered by NADBank. There is no annual federal grant program from Mexico to the Bank. Any funds from BEIF for projects in Mexico must be matched dollar-for-dollar by Mexico.

Christopher Brown asked how to support the need for more funds. *Mr. Flores* answered that Congress makes the decisions, but key stakeholders in the area, such as the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, the Border Trade Alliance, etc., need to provide support. *Chair Ganster* added that the border environmental projects in general are having difficulty in gaining Congressional support throughout the country. After said discussion, *Christopher Brown* suggested that the Board write a Comment Letter on the topic.

Lisa Almodovar, Office of International Affairs, EPA, addressed the budgetary problem of the Border 2012 program, which would lose one-third of its budget in the proposed FY2008 budget. Border 2012 is asking its stakeholders and partners to provide ideas about priorities and ways to help border communities with their environmental problems. She invited GNEB members to the National Coordinators meeting on May 22, 2007, in San Antonio and to provide comments on the Border 2012 program.

Questions and comments for Ms. Almodovar

DFO Koerner asked if there was a deadline for comments. *Ms. Almodovar* responded that comments could be received prior to the May meeting or before November. In November, they will be putting everyone's comments into a refined addendum for FY2008. *Michael Dorsey* was concerned because Border 2012 had been cut back every year, which he felt was unacceptable. *Chair Ganster* and *DFO Koerner* suggested that this issue be discussed in the following day's GNEB business meeting.

Afternoon Speaker Briefings on the Eleventh Report Theme: Natural Hazards and the U.S.-Mexico Border Environment

Introduction and Overview

(2:00 p.m.)

Chair Ganster opened the afternoon session by stating that the Board would hear from several experts on the major issues for the GNEB Eleventh Report, whose theme was the environmental effects of natural hazards at the border.

Chair Ganster asked members to focus on the policy implications related to environmental and infrastructure issues. To date, the Eleventh Report has been discussed at the GNEB Alpine Texas meeting and in a conference call. These discussions provided three options for structuring the report and developing workgroups as follows: 1) Focus on the context that would include the type of disaster, location, history, institutional framework. The types of disasters include wind and water, hurricanes, occasional tornadoes, fires and earthquakes; 2) Focus on context, mitigation, and preparedness, and then look at response, recovery, and rebuilding of human systems; and 3) Focus on context, effects, and responses related to human health, species, and eco systems effects.

Mr. Treviño, Ms. DiSirio, and Mr. Niemeyer suggested adding drought as a type of disaster due to the effects of desertification on agriculture, mass migration to the urban areas, and global climate change.

Keynote Remarks

(2:15 p.m.)

Jorge Navarro, Border Coordinator, Mexican Foreign Ministry, said that the new Ambassador of Mexico sends his greetings and recognizes the outstanding work of the GNEB. *Mr. Navarro* focused his remarks on emergency preparedness and responses by border communities to natural hazards that threaten the environment. The 1993 La Paz Meeting definition of the border has been changed to include 300 kilometers inside Mexico. The 14 pair cities on the border face the same problems from natural hazards, air pollution, and solid waste disposal which affect the well-being of populations. *Mr. Navarro* enumerated several natural hazards which had occurred in Mexico such as dust clouds, flooding in El Paso, and forest fires in California.

To provide a common response to these disasters, the U.S.-Mexico Joint Response Team was established by the La Paz agreement. The JRT has representatives from the U.S. and Mexico, federal, state, and local agencies responsible for emergency prevention, preparedness, and response in the border region. The JRT formed a Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) that established a federal mechanism for cooperation in responding to natural hazardous incidents. A better dialogue is needed between the U. S. National Response Center and the National Communications Center in Mexico. In Mexico, the Center for Environmental Emergencies of the Federal Attorney General for Environmental Protection also receives notification of disasters.

The main question is whether the JCP recognizes all natural hazards. The JCP provides the foundation for establishing sister city, bi-national, emergency responses. The JCP provides local emergency response teams with the mechanisms for addressing cooperative issues and concerns and recommendations for emergency response planning, exercises, and training

Mr. Navarro closed by stating that the Eleventh Report should prove very useful to Mexico and Mexican authorities and researchers would like to participate in a mutual dialogue on the natural hazards report. *Chair Ganster* thanked *Mr. Navarro* for his remarks and agreed that input from Mexican authorities and researchers should be incorporated into the process.

Speakers

(2:30 p.m.)

David Applegate, Senior Science Advisor for Earthquakes and Geological Hazards, USGS, DOI, welcomed the opportunity to speak about the bi-national issues and policy related to natural hazards at the border. The end goal is to reduce the vulnerabilities from both manmade threats and natural hazards. Reduction of some vulnerabilities may create other problems, such as the mass population movement into formerly rural and hazardous areas.

Mr. Applegate used a series of slides to cover the role USGS in managing six major natural hazards: earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, drought, wildfires, and tsunamis.

The USGS has statutory responsibility for issuing warnings and notifications for earthquakes, volcanoes, and landslides, and provides support for NOAA for measuring tsunamis and floods. *Mr. Applegate* is a member of a Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction which is part of the White House National Science and Technology Council, consisting of 22 agencies that look at a wide range of natural disasters and their impact on society.

A detailed presentation of six types of hazards was presented. Some of the topics included the President's *Disaster Declaration*; the *Dare to Prepare Campaign*; the *Drought Impact Reporter*; the earthquake potential from faults; hurricane and flooding damage in increasingly populous areas; debris flow from former wildfires; a potential tsunami in the San Diego/Tijuana area.; and measuring drought with stream gauge data.

Questions and Comments

Chair Ganster asked about rating the likelihood of hazards and the concentration of resources. *Mr. Applegate* replied that it was difficult to quantify the impacts of hazards because of the variability in intensity and the degree of suddenness.

Sally Spener commented that the IBWC operates and maintains the Rio Grande Flood Control Project, which consists of levees that were in danger of breaching in the El Paso flood of 2006. *Ms. Spener* hoped that the Eleventh Report would consider the issues and make recommendations related to flood control and prevention of environmental damage.

Dr. Brown asked if the science advisory effort linked floods and droughts to global climate change. *Mr. Applegate* replied that the Climate Change Research Program is coordinating efforts related to climate change.

(3:15 p.m.)

Sonja Nieuwejaar, Director, Office of International Affairs, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, stated that it was FEMA's mission to assist the United States in mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from both manmade and natural hazards. *Ms. Nieuwejaar* would focus on how the U.S. and its international counterparts are managing and responding to cross border events on the local, state, national, bi-national, and tri-national level. She provided a summary of emergency management challenges and suggested recommendations for moving forward.

One of the major incidents in 2006 was the Juárez La Montada Dam Safety Incident near El Paso. An international team consisting of the cities of El Paso and Juárez, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the IWBC, was assembled to avoid potential disaster. Although cross-border communication was good, there are no cross-border plans to address dam safety. The U. S. government could not provide direct assistance unless Mexico's government requested it. The U.S. Ambassador must declare a disaster to allow the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide assistance.

In the Arizona/Sonora Cross-Border exercises; the states of Arizona and Sonora combined the four counties of Yuma, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise under one region to hold bi-

national exercises in an improvised explosive and hazardous material event. A series of similar exercises demonstrated the need for sister-city, sister-state, and bi-national planning.

After Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. developed cross-border International Assistance Plans (IAS). The IAS established standard operating procedures for requesting assistance, reviewing offers, determining acceptability of offers, managing logistics and distributing commodities. Many U.S. agencies are involved in IAS including the State Department, FEMA, USAID, and DOD.

Ms. Nieuwejaar depicted twelve cross-border bi-national initiatives including contingency plans with Mexico and Canada. The Cross Border Tri-National Initiatives of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) provide a framework for cooperation between emergencies and for a potential avian influenza pandemic in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

The challenges of cross-border emergency management include coordination, organization, legal, regulatory, operational, logistical, and financial. For organizational contacts, the definition of triggering events and responsibilities must be established. Legal and regulatory challenges make it difficult to determine what help can be given and accepted. Medical licensing and credentialing varies from country to country. Customs duties, passport requirements, and resource manifests must be waived.

Interoperability of equipment posed the largest challenge. Global standards are needed for emergency responses. Command and control over personnel needs further discussion. Mobilization of resources requires specification of locations and handling equipment. Financial challenges related to reimbursement of expenses and transfer of funds. In dealing with the public, messages must be clear and the same for both countries. Cross-border evacuation plans need development.

In looking forward, the present initiatives at all governmental levels need to be reviewed and coordinated. Best practices and information need to be shared between plans. The various single hazard events may need to be coordinated into one emergency response plan. Lastly, an overall mutual assistance plan needs to be focused more on mitigation and preparedness activities so that information, data collection, training, and exercises could be shared.

Questions and Comments

Mr. Elbrock asked if drought should be considered a natural hazard. *Ms. Nieuwejaar* said that FEMA would treat drought the same as other emergency hazards, if it was so designated. *Mr. Applegate* said that drought is a different hazard due to its slow onset, but should be mitigated because of its significant impacts

Mr. Varady commented that the U.S. should recognize Mexico as a good neighbor in managing emergencies. He thought that emergencies should be treated differently, with rules and regulations that are determined in advance. *Ms. Nieuwejaar* responded that regulations for accepting assistance were codified after Katrina and will be used in the next disaster.

Dr. Brown asked if FEMA had reviewed its procedures to identify problems.

Ms. Nieuwejaar said that many agencies, including the White House Homeland Security Council and the Government Accountability Office, asked what FEMA was going to do to address problems in emergency management. Assistance agencies including FEMA, the State Department, and USAID reviewed and addressed problems and issues related to their purview to develop a system for the next disaster.

John Wood described three examples of cross border assistance provided by the City of Brownsville to disasters on the Mexican side of the border. He thought that “red tape” needed to be set aside in time of life-threatening disaster. *Mr. Wood* also noted that his city had established good relations with border officials to ease cross-border assistance.

In response to a question about the new passport requirements in land boundary crossings, *Rachel Poynter, Office of Mexico Affairs, U.S. Department of State (DOS)*, said that DOS and DHS have not yet resolved that issue. *Ms. Spener* thought this should be addressed in the Eleventh Report. *Ms. Spener* asked if undocumented aliens could receive aid from FEMA. *Ms. Nieuwejaar* said she would need to go back to the agency for the answer to that question.

Mr. Dorsey asked if there was a plan for transporting medical supplies and patients across the border if resources were inadequate in the neighboring country. *Ms. Nieuwejaar* said that USAID that would respond to an international disaster and determine if medical assistance could be provided to another country. FEMA could decide if medical assistance could be accepted in the U.S. States have the responsibility to determine if medical certification could be waived.

Mr. Edlund added that there is a structure for responding to emergencies that involves the federal, state and local governments’ emergency support systems and FEMA is the lead agency. He thought the structure should be reviewed for the Eleventh Report. In response to a request, *DFO Koerner* said *Ms. Nieuwejaar*’s presentation would be sent to Board members on a CD.

(4:15 p.m.)

Kevin Yeskey, M.D., Deputy Assistant Secretary (Acting), Office of Preparedness and Emergency Operations (OPEO), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), spoke from a medical and public health standpoint in describing the general approaches to hazards and challenges to international responses. The National Response Plan (NPR) currently being rewritten is for domestic response and is primarily a support mechanism for states and localities. A pandemic influenza event would require more Federal resources. *Dr. Yeskey* then described the focus of HHS in preparedness, response and recovery activities and public health considerations in an emergency.

The White House Report on Hurricane Katrina recommended a single unified command and control center within HHS for all health and medical responses. The December 2006 Pandemic All Hazards Preparedness Act identified the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response as the lead official within HHS. The Emergency Support Function Eight services include public health, primary care, acute care, in-patient care, and other duties such

as victim identification. Under the Incident Command System, HHS responses are structured under national standards.

Some of the biggest public health problems include population displacement, rumor control, and secondary effects on the environment. One of the biggest issues for preparedness is medical staff capacity. The National Disaster Medical System has 6,000 volunteers in teams who are under the control of OPEO, and five rapid deployment teams, but very few of these people have passports and could not be deployed internationally without waivers. Medical volunteers can be federalized to move across state lines, but foreign nationals cannot be federalized.

Response and recovery preparedness issues include clean-up of water, air, debris, insects, microorganisms, and toxins. Sanitation system restoration is needed to prevent wastewater going into rivers.

Questions and Comments

Chair Ganster indicated a concern about the population movement of around 100,000 Mexican nationals in Tijuana who could be on the U.S. side of the border during a disaster. *Dr. Yeskey* answered that states have mutual aid agreements and the FEMA compact managed by DHS for bringing in resources. *Chair Ganster* asked about bringing in private companies' medical resources. *Dr. Yeskey* agreed that private industry resources need to be utilized for medical assistance.

Ms. DiSirio asked for an explanation of how the U.S. is able to respond to tsunamis or other disasters in foreign countries. *Dr. Yeskey* explained that requests from foreign nations are made through DOS to the President. USAID and DHS send a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to assess the needs. DOD gets involved through its various commands, depending on the area. Funding for international responses is not structured as it is for national responses. In domestic disasters, HHS can deploy medical resources through mission assignments. Internationally, responses are slower, because resources are further away and duplication must be avoided.

Ms. Spener commented that Mexico does not request foreign aid in the event of a disaster. Even though mutual aid does occur at the local level, she doubted that USAID's response teams would be going into Mexico.

Mr. Niemeyer asked if HHS had MOUs with Mexico for medical assistance. *Ms. DiSirio*, CDC, said that there were no MOUs with Mexico. CDC responds to requests from the Officer of Federal Disaster Assistance in the International Emergency Refugee Health Branch or from the World Health Organization.

Consejo Consultivo Report

(5:00 p.m.)

Flavio Olivieri, Northwest Representative, provided an update on the Consejo organizational structure and activities under SEMARNET. Personnel changes that have occurred include Felipe Calderón, President of Mexico; Juan Elvira, Secretary of the

Environment; and Mateo Castillo, Office of Civic Participation. The National Council meets on June 4-5, 2007 in Mexico City. *Mr. Olivieri* invited *Chair Ganster* to the NW Regional Consejo on March 28-30, 2007, in Tijuana. The National Council will accept new members by December, 2007. Some of the priorities and activities included development of a national strategic plan under the new President; follow-up on the recommendations responded to by the Secretary; collaboration with SEMARNAT on the National Environmental Public Participation Strategies; and follow-up on the All American Canal and border security systems.

Successes in 2006 included legal marine zoning in the sea of Cortez, participation in the Fourth World Water Forum, and development of the National Sustainable Development Education Program with the Department of Education.

Questions and Comments

In response to a question about marine environmental zoning, *Mr. Olivieri* explained that it was an effort by several agencies to agree on how to use and protect the Sea of Cortez in view of the competition between tourism, commercial industries, fisheries, and indigenous communities.

Chair Ganster asked about the sustainable development projects and how the new administration might affect future activities. *Mr. Olivieri* responded that the Calderón administration had used the word “sustainability,” in all their proposals. SEMARNAT seems to be getting more support and giving more authority to state governments. Information on environmental events is being shared with Consejo Councils.

Ms. Krebs asked if businesses are regulated differently in the states or regions. *Mr. Olivieri* replied that the federal law should be applied nationwide, although states may have different regulations. More authority is being given to the states and municipalities in the new Administration.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at **5:07 p.m.**

Day 2 – March 14, 2007

(8:00 a.m.)

Business Meeting and Strategic Planning Session

Business Meeting

New Member Introductions, Goals for Board Membership

DFO Elaine Koerner opened the business meeting and welcomed the three new, non-Federal members: *Patti Krebs*, *John Wood*, and *Susan Keith*. *Daniel Darrach*, Department of State, and *Gary Robinson*, DHS, were recently appointed Federal members. After the new members spoke briefly about their interests, *Chair Ganster* presented them with GNEB pins.

Sally Spener noted that President Bush, at a meeting in Mexico that week, issued a statement about the need for cooperation on trade, immigration, and security between both countries and acknowledged the need to protect their shared natural resources.

Approval of the Minutes

Chair Ganster asked if there were any changes to the minutes. *Stephen Niemeyer* and *Christopher Brown* provided *DFO Koerner* with some minor corrections and typographical errors which would be incorporated before the minutes are posted on the website. Several members thought the minutes were well done. *Gary Gillen* moved adoption of the minutes with changes as provided to *DFO Koerner*. *Dr. Brown* seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Dissemination Plan for the Tenth Report

DFO Koerner briefly reviewed the dissemination plan for the GNEB Tenth Report. She asked members to note the number of reports they would like to receive and indicate where they could distribute the report. *Dr. Brown* suggested making a one page summary of the key highlights, with a brief cover letter and a URL for the GNEB website link, for distribution to Congressional Offices and other busy, influential people. *Ms. Montoya* offered to have the World Wildlife Fund office in Mexico City distribute the report to the Mexican border delegation. Another member suggested sending the report to the EPA attaché in Mexico.

DFO Koerner acknowledged that the distribution system was not systematic. She encouraged members to distribute copies to colleagues and at meetings and to report back to her for the tracking report. Around 4,000 copies had been printed. The possibility of using CDs or DVDs could be discussed in the future.

Discussion of the Eleventh Report

(8:30 a.m.)

To focus the Board's thinking on the GNEB mission of advising the President and Congress on environmental infrastructure issues, *DFO Koerner* proposed four questions as follows:

1. How are air, water, waste, and related infrastructure affected by border region natural hazards?
2. How are human and environmental health affected?
3. Why does the border region deserve special focus in terms of this issue?
4. What can and should the Federal Government do to better manage natural resources in the border region to better protect human health and the environment?

Mr. Niemeyer commented that state and local governments and other partners should be included in Question 4. *Ms. Keith* thought one of the main questions was "Why should EPA be involved? She added that if a huge earthquake happened in another state, it could affect Arizona in terms of population displacement, and health concerns would be paramount.

Mr. Gillen and *Dr. Brown* identified the need to heed *Mr. Clifford's* urge to keep the report relevant to science-based policy and to focus on actionable events. *DFO Koerner* added that the report should clearly communicate what is the current policy and system and what changes are being recommended. *Ms. Keith* added that the report should focus on emerging issues that would need new policy. *Ms. Montoya* thought the focus should be on current programs and responsibilities. *Mr. Stefanov* said that the connection between the selected topic and the border environment needs to be clearly stated.

Gary Gillen emphasized the importance of ensuring that GNEB's work is focused on what is valuable to the President. *DFO Koerner* reminded them of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that were developed with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The goal was to create a more direct line with the Office of the President and have a dialogue between the GNEB and CEQ, starting with the Twelfth Report. *Mark Joyce* described the step-wise process in more detail that would ensure GNEB reports would be useful to the President and the entire government.

In response to a question from *Ms. DiSirio*, *Mr. Joyce* said there was no systematic way to document or assess whether action was taken on advisory committee recommendations. This assessment is more difficult because the recommendations involve many governmental agencies and programs. *Chair Ganster* reminded the Board of *Robert Varady's* subgroup on evaluation that worked on assessing the impact of GNEB's recommendations. *Mr. Joyce* added that the GNEB has been an important force in changing EPA's policies, even though it may take several years for the policies to be changed. *Mr. Dorsey* said that Congressional priorities and GNEB's expert opinions were both important and that GNEB needs to make a better case for chosen topics.

Mr. Edlund suggested allowing *Mr. Clifford* to review the conceptual outline of GNEB report topics. *Mr. Joyce* thought that CEQ would also be a good sounding board for drafts

of the reports. *DFO Koerner* reminded the Board that although the GNEB is in partnership with Border 2012, GNEB is an independent board.

Chair Ganster raised the issue of outside support for doing research and drafting report. *Mr. Joyce* stated that *Rafael DeLeon, Director of OCEM*, was committed to getting a support contract for this Board and the other EPA/OCEM advisory committees, but that the process of governmental contracting was difficult. Some short-term support is possible. Several members made suggestions for hiring students or interns, such as through university grants and USGS contracts. *DFO Koerner* suggested the need for a conference call on the subject. Members agreed and several volunteered to participate: *James Stefanov, Marilyn DiSirio, Rosendo Treviño, and Carl Edlund*. The conference call to review options for hiring a student to do research and write reports would be held March 27 at 2:00 p.m. EST.

To focus the Board on the Eleventh Report, *Chair Ganster* asked them to review a list of FEMA-declared disasters which had affected border counties from 1998 to the present. *Chair Ganster* asked members to suggest possible recommendations in the area of natural hazard disasters. Board members suggested the following:

- Bi-national preparedness plans, including command and control issues, personnel, communications, interoperability, and exercises
- Emergency responders cross-border functions and problems, such as passports
- Flood protection that benefits the environment.
- Bi-national wildfire and flood disaster planning
- The relationship between border security and natural disasters, such as flooding
- Formal structures and their authority to engage in bi-national operations, such as the State Department, and structures that are needed
- Mexico's policies and actions in border disasters
- Development of natural hazards preparedness plans and training programs.

Suggestions on research and review of plans and involvement and of other agencies, organizations, and governments in development of the report included:

- FEMA/DHS that are responsible for disaster management
- Collaboration and mutual agreements or MOUs with Mexico similar to the Border Liaison Mechanism
- HHS and CDC for health protection expertise and plans
- Local governmental emergency response plans, problems and gaps
- The 14 Sister City agreements on emergency responses
- County disaster preparedness plans developed after Katrina and their relationship to cross-border events.

Suggestions for structuring the report included making a check lists in three parts: 1) actions that are immediately doable, 2) actions that are doable, but require more resources; and 3) barriers to actions. Another suggestion was to consider one or two worst case disaster scenarios, like an earthquake or hurricane, and determine what emergency responses would be required and how well prepared and equipped responders are to handle the disasters.

Chair Ganster asked *DFO Koerner* to discuss a possible theme and workgroups. *DFO Koerner* suggested the main theme: What are the environmental effects of natural hazards and what actions are needed? She suggested three workgroups based on Board expertise as follows:

1. Air quality, water quality, land and related infrastructure issues, such as drinking water plants, sewage treatment plants, etc.
2. Wildlife and ecosystems
3. Human health.

Key issues, such as the institutional framework, and context would be part of the introduction. *Mr. Stefanov* offered to be involved in writing the introduction.

The discussion of themes and workgroup structure and issues yielded the following:

- Combining Workgroup 2 with 1 or as a subset of 1.
- Grouping by context, mitigation and preparedness, and response and recovery.
- Focusing on disasters that would have trans-border effects and any event within 100 miles of the border
- Focusing on the unique preparation and mitigation of natural hazards near the border
- Having members with different expertise in each workgroup
- Including drought as a natural disaster related to air quality and human diseases

It was determined that combining options 2 and 3 as the main framework so that items in option 1-3 would be repeated under preparedness, response and recover, and mitigation. Three workgroups were defined as context, planning and mitigation, and response and rebuilding. Members signed up for the workgroups and coordinators, as follows:

- Context: *James Stefanov, Coordinator, Rosario Marin, Deputy Coordinator, Rachel Poynter, Gary Gillen, Robert Varady, Sally Spener, and Christopher Brown.*
- Planning and Mitigation: *Jennifer Montoya, Co-Coordinator, Michael Dorsey, Co-Coordinator, Ann Marie Wolf, Susan Keith, Marilyn DiSirio, John Wood.*
- Response and Rebuilding: *Carl Edlund, Coordinator, Stephen Niemeyer Deputy Coordinator, Gary Robinson, and Edward Elbrock.*

Ms. Keith was concerned about overlap with the Tenth Report in terms of disaster responses to hazmat hazards protocols, which have already been written down. *Mr. Dorsey* thought the natural disaster responses would be on a larger scale. *Mr. Edlund* offered to present a slide show to the Board on response procedures related to Katrina and other disasters. *Ms. Montoya* explained that not all counties were as well-prepared as Arizona. The focus in planning and mitigation would be on how to prevent land degradation from creating natural disasters. *Commissioner Marin* added that the issue of flood control models goes beyond emergency response and includes endangered species and collaboration with Mexico.

To explain the importance of drought and desertification as a natural disaster, *Mr. Treviño* offered to summarize the findings from the United Nations Convention on Drought and send it to members. *DFO Koerner* said the Context Workgroup would be tasked with

determining which issues would be included. Other members could be involved in the first conference call on context to have input into included issues.

DFO Koerner asked members to set dates and times for workgroup conference calls:

- Context: April 5 at 11:00 a.m. EST
- Planning and Mitigation: April 3 at 12:00 noon EST
- Recovery and Rebuilding: April 10 at 3:00 p.m. EST

Mr. Gillen offered to coordinate the photographs for the report and asked members to send him pictures related to their section of the report.

Strategic Planning

(9:30 a.m.)

DFO Koerner reviewed materials in the GNEB folders related to Strategic Planning, including mission, vision, goals and principles, CEQ's SOPs, and a work plan grid. *DFO Koerner* would add names of the new workgroups to the work grid. *Ms. Montoya* suggested removing the name of *Karen Chapman* from the planning committee, since she will be moving away. *Chair Ganster* offered to be on the Las Cruces meeting planning group and to help with the field visit.

Mr. Niemeyer shared some concerns about the GNEB mission, vision and goals statements. He asked for clarification of the meaning of "community input." *DFO Koerner* answered that this meant input from people in border communities. *Mr. Niemeyer* made several other suggestions for changes as follows:

- Change "enable" strategic allocation to "facilitate."
- Change "result" to "The desired result."
- Change "retain" independent perspective to "emphasize."

DFO Koerner asked if members agreed with these changes and there were no objections, so the changes would be made.

He also suggested that, under the SOP with CEQ the word "GNEB" be changed to OCEM since the final agreements were made between OCEM and CEQ.

DFO Koerner asked if members agreed with these changes and there were no objections, so the changes would be made.

Dr. Brown voiced a concern about the role and status of Federal members in regard to recusing themselves from signing GNEB's advisory letters. Various Federal members replied that there were various reasons related to their agencies' policies and procedures that caused them to recuse themselves, but that these were rare occasions. Letters were reviewed by Federal members on a case-by-case basis. After some discussion, *DFO Koerner* said that

the legislation specifically calls for voting Federal Board members. She suggested further discussion of the role of Federal members at the next meeting.

Chair Ganster suggested writing a comment letter on Border 2012, including its successes and ideas for course corrections. *Dr. Brown* said he was in favor of this letter and also one on BEIF funding that was suggested in the public comments on Day 1. *Chair Ganster* thought more study would be required to develop a statement. *Ms. Montoya* requested that members be provided a copy of the Border 2012 report. *Mr. Niemeyer* and *Mr. Dorsey* both stated that the Border 2012 letter should include the need for more funds. *Mr. Dorsey, Dr. Brown, Ms. Wolf, and Mr. Niemeyer* offered to help with the letter. A conference call to discuss the letter was set up for April 16, 2007, at 3:00 p.m. EST. The concept of a separate letter on BEIF funding was approved and *Chair Ganster* said a call for volunteers would be emailed to members.

DFO Koerner asked what OCEM did that worked well for the GNEB in the past year and what areas need to be more effective or need more resources. Positive items mentioned included community meetings, field trips, a higher profile for GNEB reports, and a focus on timely and variable topics. Members also noted that the Chair was able to guide the Board to consensus on issues. The DFO and the OCEM staff received recognition for their support and responsiveness.

Chair Ganster asked members to discuss challenges for the future. *Ms. Montoya* would like to have a freer flow of discussion that does not depend on naming who speaks. To reduce the amount of paper, several members would prefer to have pre-meeting papers emailed to them: *Mr. Dorsey, Dr. Varady, Ms. Wolf, Mr. Stefanov, Ms. Krebs, Mr. Olivieri, Ms. DiSirio, Ms. Poynter, and Mr. Darrach*. *Dr. Brown* and other members were concerned about the GSA system for purchasing airline tickets, which could be obtained for much less by individuals, and which would allow people to fly to more than one place on the same ticket. Several members thought the Rogers travel agency was very helpful and accommodating.

After this, several housekeeping items were reviewed by *Lois Williams, OCEM*, in terms of how to account for and receive payments. *Chair Ganster* said he would like the issue of transportation in government vans to be clarified. *Mr. Joyce* answered that the issue was being studied and guidance should soon be finalized.

Khanna Johnston, OCEM, informally briefed the Board on lobbying policy with Congress. The anti-lobbying law that applies to Federal employees and contractors does not apply to GNEB members. However, use of appropriated funds, such as for travel, does prohibit indirect lobbying, which is telling someone else to lobby a Congressional representative for a program, legislation or funds. The charters that set up the FACA committee members do not allow lobbying. However, members could share findings and recommendations with Congress, because this is information-sharing. *Ms. Johnston* said that she was told that the connection between financing of travel and lobbying was too remote to be a concern.

Remarks from EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson

(10:15 a.m.)

Stephen L. Johnson, EPA Administrator thanked members for their willingness to serve on the Board and for their work on the excellent Tenth Report. The Report's themes, messages, and recommendations were in concert with EPA's relationship with border nations and globally to improve the environment and security. He stated that the Inspector General had commented favorably on EPA's responses to the hurricane disaster. He also said he was pleased to report that the President's FY2008 budget had \$10 million for the U.S.-Mexico border and EPA has as additional \$40 million of unobligated funds. During 2006, 22,000 more people at the border gained access to safe and clean water. *Administrator Johnson* closed by stating that the U.S. has one of the world's premier environmental protection agencies. He urged the Board to provide EPA with insights in the Eleventh Report on how to handle natural disasters.

Board Member Report-Outs

(12:30 p.m.)

James Stefanov, USGS, DOI, reported on several developments to improve data collection and monitoring along the border as follows:

- Development of the Colonia Health Infrastructure and Platting Status Tool (CHPST) that monitors progress, set infrastructure priorities, and measure quality of life
- Cooperation between USGS, IBWC, and INEGI to build bi-national GIS data sets for natural resources for the border region
- Coordination of the bi-national watershed delineations and hydrographic network
- Integration of bi-national and transboundary water quality data, contaminant data, and land cover/use data to look at linkages between environmental conditions and human health issues at the border
- Partnership between the zoos in San Diego and Mexico and SEMARNAT to set up a condor captive breeding facility at the request of the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico.

Christopher Brown, Ph.D. New Mexico State University, reported on several topics;

- A Federal Highway Administration grant to proceed on a border infrastructure needs assessment, Phase 2, under the joint bi-national transportation planning group that involves FHWA, the Mexican Secretaria de Comunicación y Transporte, and 10 border states' departments of transportation
- A project with the World Wildlife Fund to do GIS mapping in the Paso del Norte region related to conservation
- Publication of a report by the New Mexico Journal of Science on water resource vulnerability in the Paso del Norte region in cooperation with the Southwest Consortium on Environmental Research and Policy (SCERP).
- A final report on another SCERP project on developing a bi-national GIS system.

Sally Spener, IWBC, announced that President Bush had appointed Commissioner Marin as Commissioner of the U.S. section; he has been serving as Acting Commissioner. The Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant is being upgraded. However, the

international outfall interceptor that conveys sewage to the treatment plant is not being upgraded due to lack of funding.

Jennifer Montoya, WWF, reported that river restoration will receive \$2.5 million of Governor Richardson's capital budget. This is the start of a statewide initiative to integrate all of the state agencies that are involved in river management on the Rio Grande.

Carl Edlund, Region 6, EPA, handed out a one-page report that included an upcoming Border 2012 National Coordinators Meeting on May 22-24, 2007; an update of the U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 video; a conference on scrap tire and used oil management; BEIF funding in the quarterly management report; and several other items. He also said that the EPA office had briefed Senator Feinstein's office. *DFO Koerner* asked for a copy of the quarterly report to email to members.

Rosendo Treviño, National Resources Conservation Service, USDA, distributed fact sheets on USDA activities. The fact sheets included the reauthorization of the Farm Bill and information on an MOU between the USDA Secretary, and the Mexican Agriculture and Economic Secretary to reestablish the U.S.-Mexico Consultative Committee on Agriculture (CCA). *Mr. Treviño* is a member of the CCA Board. *Mr. Treviño* added that the NRCS has received large increases in funds for conservation since 1995. State conservationists focus their assistance on shared watersheds with Mexico. The U. S. and Mexican conservationists will stage a bi-national earth day celebration in Alpine, Texas on May 23.

Lana Corrales, CDC, reported for *Marilyn DiSirio*, who had to leave for the airport, on CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry activities. An environmental health workgroup involving CDC, Mexico, USEPA, and Border 2012 health task forces is working to reach consensus on border-wide priorities for FY2007 to promote health indicator projects on traffic and air pollution, dengue fever, and gastrointestinal illness in Baja, California, related to new water systems. She is also involved with the Border Indicators Task Force to improve environmental health and the Border Health Commission on lead poisoning.

Stephen Niemeyer, P.E., Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, distributed a written report that included the Border 2012 meeting in Austin on February 27, 2007; a Water Work Table Meeting at the Border Governor's Conference on February 21, 2007; a TCEQ and University of Texas conference on scrap tires and used-oil on February 26 to March 1, 2007; and a 2007 Border to Border Transportation Conference on April 17-19, 2007. *Mr. Niemeyer* pointed out that Deputy Secretary of State Buddy Garcia was appointed and was approved by the Texas Senate as the new TCEQ Commissioner.

Rachel Poynter, Office of Mexico Affairs, Department of State, described her role in covering U.S.-Mexico environment and health issues and working with U.S. agencies such as EPA, DOI, USGS, and Fish and Wildlife. Three issues of interest to the Board included a communiqué related to migratory bird habitat conservation, a NEPA assessment of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and land requirements; and a meeting with all of the border governors. DHS, FEMA, and DOS are working on more rapid movement of

resources across the border. A plan would be developed similar to the one developed for the Canadian border.

Michael Dorsey, San Diego County Department of Environmental Health, discussed the emergency management institute at the University of Baja California in Tijuana that trains first responders. In October, 2005, a settlement with Equilon for \$10.5 million enabled them to purchase emergency response equipment for the City of Tijuana Fire Department. Recently, *Mr. Dorsey* was appointed Chief of the Community Health Division in charge of the Vector Control Program, oversight of landfills and burn sites, occupational health, and radiological health.

Susan Keith, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, reported that ADEQ received a Border 2012 grant to clean up migrant waste and develop a stakeholder process for future clean-ups. ADEQ is studying air quality in the border sister cities and is working with IBWC on planning for the international Nogales wastewater plant.

Dr. Brown asked about the new RFID chip in passports that would allow more rapid border crossings. *Ms. Poynter* responded that the technology was being developed and undergoing a NEPA assessment of the effect on wait times at the border. *Mr. Olivieri* said that his passport is screened whenever he crosses into the U.S. from Mexico, but the technology for scanning passports for U.S. exits to Mexico was not yet in place.

Wrap Up and Adjournment

(1:20 p.m.)

DFO Koerner set up a conference call to plan for the July 24-25 GNEB meeting in Brownsville, Texas, for Monday, April 2, 2007 at 12 noon EST. *Mr. Joyce* congratulated the Board on their work in developing the recommendations for the Tenth Report that received favorable comments from Administrator Johnson and other agency officials.

The meeting was adjourned at **1:30 p.m.**

Appendix

Mary Brandt, U.S. IBWC
Don Coelho, U.S. National Park Service
Eric Cook, Border Programs, GSA
Adam Domby, Congressman Girjalva's Office
Luis Fernandez, EPA
Mike Feullo, BNA
Carey Fitzmaurice, EPA
Laura Gomez, OIA, EPA
Mark Harvey, Office of Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Management, National Park Service, DOI
Khanna Johnston, OCEM, AO, EPA
Ellie Kanipe, OSW, EPA
Emily Kilcrease, Office of International Affairs, DOI
Deborah Kopsick, RPI, ORIA, EPA
Teresa Kuklinski, EPA
Corinne Lackner, Defenders of Wildlife
Todd Owen, CBP, DHS
Jonathan Putnam, National Park Service
Toni Rousey, OCEM, AO, EPA
Russell Smith, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
Sue Stendebach, EPA
Tim Sullivan, U.S. Border Patrol
Tyanne Stewart, AEIO, EPA
Kim Thorsen, Director, Office of Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Management, DOI